



A Decade Long Journey of Debre Markos University, 2007-2016

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Abstract

In Ethiopia, there is a paucity of historical studies on institutions in general and higher education institution in particular. Debre Markos University/DMU/ is one of those higher institutions whose past is not researched. Consequently, we lack authentic information about its entire development. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the ten years journey of DMU. Greater attempt has been exerted to utilize first hand sources namely reports, annual plans, strategic plans, legislations, oral information and so on. The findings show that DMU started work before accomplishing preliminaries well. Neither the physical infrastructure nor the human and material resources have been on the right position for the University to set in motion. The ten years journey of DMU was, therefore, a formative period upon which the young institution strived to organize itself to be an effective higher education institution.

Key word: Debre Markos; Decade; Historical; Modularization; Research; University.

Introduction

Ethiopia is one of the few nations having a long history of writing. Scholars uncovered inscriptions dates more than two thousand years. However, a well-organized and institution based education started in the 4th century with the introduction and subsequent expansion of Christianity. Since then, church has been running a sophisticated and complex education system, and contributing to produce clerical servants.¹ Similarly, Islamic education has been contributing much in expanding literacy and producing Muslim clerics.²

Nonetheless, Ethiopia is new to modern, western style, education. European missionaries who came to Ethiopia in the 19th century tutored children. But, it was with the opening of Menelik II Primary School in 1908 that modern education was formally introduced in Ethiopia.³ Higher education was introduced in Ethiopia right at the mid of the 20th century. It started in 1950 with the inauguration of the University College of Addis Ababa.⁴ It began late even after the introduction of modern education in the country. Likewise, it had expanded slowly for half a century. History attests that



the country had stayed all through the imperial, military and the transitional government periods having not more than two universities. The meager efforts that had been exerted by the EPRDF government towards the late 1990s did not significantly change the trend.⁵ Visible transformation has been registered since the foundation of the thirteen universities⁶: Debre Berhan, Debre Markos, Aksum, Dilla, Dire Dewa, Jigjiga, Meda Wolabu, Wolayita Sodo, Mizan Tepi, Semera, Bule Hora, Wollega and Wollo.⁷ Though more than ten years have elapsed since DMU appeared on the educational landscape, there are no scholarly works produced on it. The University's accomplishments are recounted based on public opinions derived from assumptions and mere comparisons with the growth and development of sister higher education institutions. Thus, we need to know the true picture of DMU from a systematic research work. The motivation to undertake this study arose from the curiosity to uncover those historical developments.

Regarding methodology, the research employs a historical approach as the issue selected for discussion takes us back to the recent past. Though, the study depends largely upon primary sources, oral information as well as secondary documents,

too, has been consulted. All types of sources have been carefully cross-checked and critically analyzed. Afterwards, greater attempts have been made to interpret data correctly and present it objectively. The reliable data have been presented without addition or subtraction so as to underpin objectivity.

Plainly, anticipated opportunities and challenges vary in nature and extent through time. This necessitates weighing achievements and failures from the vantage point of the historical period. Thus, the researchers found plausible to conduct the discussion dividing it into two main rubrics: Early period, 2005- 2010/2011 and late period, 2011/2012-2016/2017. Similar reasons enforcing us to present the early period organizing into two sub-headings: beginning and expansion

The Early period (2005-2010/2011)

Beginning

Identifying site had been on track in a short time after the government notified the building of the thirteen universities. Informants recount that two sites were proposed for establishing DMU: Endimata /አንድማጣ/, the present location and Yiraba /ይራባ/, a place situated on the highway to Addis Ababa. Although sources are not in good position to indicate selection criterion,



proximity to the town perhaps weight more opting for Endimata /አንድማጣ/. Save it, the foundation stone was laid in January 2005 by Teshome Yizengaw (PhD), Deputy Minister of Education. Construction had progressed since the late 2005 by a local firm named Tekle Berhan Ambaye General Contractor under the consultancy of GTZ (a German Agency for Technical Cooperation), a Non-Governmental Organization.⁸

DMU had started work before it completed half of the first phase of construction. Off the 22 buildings planned to be erected under this phase, only nine have been finalized and primed for the desired purposes: class, offices, library, and the like. This set of buildings not only excepted students' cafeteria but also lacked important structures like interconnected water and sewerage systems. The University constructed interim student cafeteria, standing water taps, bath rooms and dry latrines seeing that they were compulsory to set in motion.⁹

The human resource development went well along with construction. Sintayehu Woldemikael (PhD), the first president, was nominated sometime before site selection. However, before taking office at Debre Markos, he was replaced by Tewodros Bekafa (PhD) in February 2006. In August by the same year, key supportive personnel

were recruited: secretariat, accountant, store keeper and guards. While Mrs. Emebet Anagaw was assigned secretary of the president office, Mr. Minwuyelet Assefa was designated head of the Administrative Department. With this, the administrative staff gets established. The young staff held a temporary office at Debre Markos College of Teacher Education. In early October 2006, Mr. Yilkal Kefale (now Dr.) was appointed as the first academic vice president. By the coming month, the first teaching staff was recruited. Subsequently, prominent organs like the registrar office, students' affairs dean and departments have been established and heads have been nominated. While Mr. Desalew Abawa was designated as the first head of the registrar office, Mr. Abebe Mulugeta was made the first dean of student affairs.¹⁰

The other major preliminary activities were developing a curriculum and collecting teaching and reference materials. The University sent department heads or a staff member from the department to Bahir Dar and Addis Ababa Universities to share experience and come up with model curriculums. Then, it developed workable set of courses through adopting the curriculums of the aforementioned well established universities. Parallel with the



curriculum development, considerable efforts were exerted to provide teaching and reference materials. Teaching and reference materials were acquired through purchasing and copying. They have been kept at Number One Library.¹¹ After doing the aforementioned preliminary activities, DMU started work in February 2007 with 760 students and few programs. It has initiated the Faculty of Education having eight departments namely Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Amharic, English, Geography & Environmental Studies, and History (later renamed History and Heritage Management).¹²

Expansion, 2007/2008-2010/2011

The inaugural celebration of DMU was conducted on 18, November, 2007, about a year after it started work, by the honorable Addisu Legesse, the then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.¹ This section tries to address developments registered during the subsequent four years of the early period under independent rubrics.

Infrastructure

When DMU started the teaching-learning undertaking, there were only some completed buildings. Although construction

work was expected to be finished by the end of the early period,¹³ it remained at its lowest ebb.¹⁴ The more construction work delayed, the longer the University community was suffering from lack of proper facilities. The dearth of some infrastructures needs explanation.

As it has already mentioned before, DMU started work erecting interim water tap, latrines and baths, in selected areas and aloof from buildings, seeing that the water and sewerage system of completed set of buildings was not installed.¹⁵ For years, therefore, there was no access to water and lavatory services in and around staff offices, classes, libraries and the like. True, searching for these facilities had been a great burden of the University community.¹⁶

It too was further complicated due to the absence of well-made walkways. The safety of existing pathways deteriorated further as the natural earth was disturbed and gullies were formed due to construction. All intentional and inadvertent movements interrupted or became so difficult with a minor rain. After rainfall, it was common to observe individuals slipping and falling down here and there, and now and then. Staff members had injured while traveling.¹⁷ Question had been forwarded to the high management for long though it remained

¹The inauguration stone is erected on the entry way of Number One Library.



futile.¹⁸ So therefore, the absence of an interconnected water and sewerage system as well as well-built walkways had remained

setbacks for all activities and a menace for the community's well-being, too.



Picture-1- The Partial Scene of DMU during the Early Period. Source: Photo Gallery of DMU

Academic Programs

All through the first three years, DMU had launched new faculties and departments. We have mentioned before those appeared at the beginning year. During the second year, the Faculties of Business and Economics, the Faculties of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the School of Law were established¹⁹ with four, two and one departments respectively.²⁰ Beyond this, the department of Psychology was launched in that same year.²¹ During the third year,

Technology and Health Science Faculties have emerged each with four and two departments respectively. Besides, two departments were launched within the Faculty of Agriculture and Rural Development.²²

The fourth and fifth years were not momentous in the history of academic program expansion. Both did not witness the opening of new faculties. Only two departments were established during the fifth year. Yet, the early period was glorious



in the arena of academic program expansion. Not only had the number of academic programs increased but also all survived the grave physical and human resource shortage. Only a short-term collapse of the department of Banking and Finance was recorded.²³

Clearly, faculties and departments are said to have been opened based on preliminary studies. However, the dearth of prominent inputs namely laboratory, workshops, senior teaching staff and so on²⁴ indicates existing unplanned activities.

Table-1. Summary of Academic Programs Launched during the Early Period.

No.	Colleges	Departments	Year of establishment
1	Faculty of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mathematics ▪ Physics ▪ Chemistry ▪ Biology ▪ Amharic ▪ English ▪ Geography and Environmental Studies ▪ History ▪ Psychology ▪ Sport Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2006 ▪ 2006 ▪ 2006 ▪ 2006 ▪ 2006 ▪ 2006 ▪ 2006 ▪ 2006 ▪ 2007 ▪ 2010
2	Faculty of Business and Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economics ▪ Management ▪ Accounting ▪ Banking and Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2007 ▪ 2007 ▪ 2007 ▪ 2007
3	Faculty of Agriculture and Rural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Natural Resource Management ▪ Rural Development ▪ Plant Science ▪ Animal Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2007 ▪ 2007 ▪ 2008 ▪ 2008
4	Faculty of Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electrical Engineering, ▪ Mechanical Engineering, ▪ Civil Engineering ▪ Information Technology ▪ Construction Technology ▪ Management Engineering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2008 ▪ 2008 ▪ 2008 ▪ 2008 ▪ 2010
5	Faculty of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health Officer ▪ Nursing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2008 ▪ 2008
6	School of Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2007

Human Resource

In terms of enrollment, the number of students grew from 760 registered in 2007 to 10,626 registered by 2010/2011.²⁵ The teaching and non-teaching staffs rose to 515

and 195 by the 2010/2011 respectively. Yet, the academic staff had suffered from a serious shortage of second and third degree holders'. As an interim solution, DMU had



been importing teachers from abroad, particularly from India.²⁶

Table -1: Shows Annual Human Resource Growth during the Early Period.

Year	Teaching staff					Non-teaching staff					Students		
	Di p.	Deg .	Master	PhD	Total	certif .	Dip.	Deg .	Master	Total	Dip.	Deg.	Total
2006/2007	-	-	-	-	53*	-	-	-	-	15*	-	760	760*
2007/2008	-	80	74	1	155	66	35	7	-	108	931	3,314	4245*
2008/2009	4	121	117	6	248	46	76	23	1	146	1724	6,747	8,471
2009/2010	7	177	160	7	351	50	86	27	-	163	972	9,350	10,322
2010/2011	7	257	236	15	515	44	106	45	-	195	-	10,626	10,626

Source: Annual reports *No data for summer degree sts.*No information about academic rank

Curriculum and Reference Materials

Shortly after DMU had embarked on work, the Ministry of Education initiated a reform. The reform forced DMU to develop another set of courses. Two curriculum reforms were made within a year time span. The first curriculum reform inaugurated the granting of applied degree in place of bestowing a bachelor of education degree. The second introduced new approach of teaching known as Modularization. Modularization requires not only assembling of courses according to their thematic proximity but also a paradigm shift in methodology. DMU entered to Modular teaching early compared to sister Higher Education Institutions. It had invested much for its practical implementation, too.²⁷

In the arena of providing reference materials, greater attempt was made to equip Number One and Number Two Libraries with the necessary reference materials

through purchasing, gift and copying. Establishing an Electronic library was planned by 2008/2009 and materialized by 2010/2011 academic year.²⁸

Teaching, Research and Community Service

During the early period, every activity was heading for initiating the teaching-learning work with limited academic units, meeting the minimum requirement of facilities and resources of various types. Partly because of that, DMU did not establish attractive University ground that ranges from class rooms comfort, workable campus environment, availability and accessibility of facilities, qualified and experienced teaching staff etc. which fully support its mission of attaining quality education and producing competent graduates. Thus, the final word that could be said at this point time is that DMU had successfully put the



teaching-learning task in place with fine wishes geared to enrich it.

DMU initiated staff research by 2008/2009 academic year sponsoring nine research projects. By the coming year, 13 research proposals won approval. In 2010/2011 academic year, 34 research works were in progress. It conducted the first national conference by 2009/2010 academic year.²⁹

Being a young institution, it embarked on research in good time. The overall progress was also encouraging. But, sources were not in a good position to inform us as to what extent the community service was realized.

The Late period, 2011/2012-2016/2017

Infrastructure

Needless to say, construction had not progressed as per its initial plan. The building of each unit had taken extra time. Yet, the construction of important set of buildings: student dormitories, classes, libraries, staff offices, auditoriums, students' cafeteria and the like were completed just before the end of the late period. Roughly, the construction of New Buildings, Haddis Alemayehu Hall, Staff Lounge, Administrative Building and some others were under construction or at a stage of planning towards the end of the decade. Alongside, campus beautification endeavors like building walkways, constructing

treatment plant, erecting street light, constructing fence and gate, planting trees and so on were taking place. Except the treatment plant, all the aforementioned projects were accomplished well.³⁰ Had time and space allowed, we would certainly have narrated in detail the histories of the aforementioned undertakings.

Academic Programs

After the University had instituted the post-graduate dean office by 2011/2012, 20 post-graduate programs were launched all through the discussion period. In the undergraduate program, 17 departments were opened.³¹ Beyond its plan, DMU opened the Institute of Land Administration in 2014/2015.³² The University upgraded Faculty, the highest academic unit to this point, into College during the late period. By the end of the decade, therefore, there were one Institute, six Colleges³³ and one School having 43 departments in the undergraduate program. In the post-graduate program, 20 fields of specialization had been operative in five colleges. It should be noted that the Post-graduate program was initiated and made to expand in a state of basic inputs paucity. The University ran the Post-graduate Program having no adequate assistant professors,³⁴ appropriate classrooms and reference materials.



Concisely, the Post-graduate Study began ahead of its time for most of the departments.

Table-3. Summary of Academic Programs Launched during the Late Period.

Undergraduate program			
No.	Colleges	Departments	Year of Establishment
1	College of Social Sciences & Humanities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civics & ethical education ▪ Sociology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2011 ▪ 2011
2	College of Natural & Computational Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statistics ▪ Bio-technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2011 ▪ 2014
3	College of Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hydraulics & water resource engineering ▪ Computer science ▪ Software engineering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2011 ▪ 2014 ▪ 2015
4	College of Agriculture & Natural Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Horticulture ▪ Agribusiness & value chain management ▪ Agro forestry ▪ Agricultural economics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2011 ▪ 2013 ▪ 2014 ▪ 2015
5	College of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Midwifery ▪ Medicine ▪ Pharmacy ▪ Medical laboratory science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2011 ▪ 2011 ▪ 2015 ▪ 2015
6	College of Business & Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2011
7	Institute of Land Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2015
Post-graduate program			
8	College of Social Sciences & Humanities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching English as foreign language ▪ Literature ▪ Environmental & Land Resource Management ▪ Developmental psychology ▪ Master of applied linguistic in teaching Amharic ▪ Master in school leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2012 ▪ 2012 ▪ 2012 ▪ 2013 ▪ 2013 ▪ 2015
2	College of Natural & Computational Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ecology & Systematic Zoology ▪ Physics(Nuclear) ▪ Mathematics(Algebra) ▪ Mathematics(differential) ▪ General Entomology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2012 ▪ 2013 ▪ 2014 ▪ 2014 ▪ 2015
3	College of Agriculture & Natural Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crop & irrigation agronomy ▪ Animal nutrition & feed processing ▪ Rural development & transformation ▪ Agricultural economics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2013 ▪ 2013 ▪ 2013



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2013
4	College of Business & Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Master of business administration ▪ Master of accounting & finance ▪ Development economics ▪ Project & planning management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2012 ▪ 2012 ▪ 2013 ▪ 2013
5	College of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Master of public health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2012

Human Resource

DMU’s population grew during the late period. Students and the teaching staff doubled while the non-teaching staff quadrupled. The academic staff professional mix was 9 third degrees, 341 second degree

and 264 first degrees in 2011/2012.³⁵ Five years later, the number of third and second degree holders grew to 35, 683 respectively.³⁶ Still, DMU was suffering from a dearth of qualified teaching staff.³⁷

Table-2. The Table Shows Annual Human Resource Growth of the Late Period.

Year	Teaching staff					Non-teaching staff					students		
	Dip.	Deg.	Master	PhD	Total	Certif.	Dip.	Deg.	Master	Total	Deg.	Master	Total
2011/2012	21	264	341	9	635	53	158	60	-	271	14,544	-	14,544
2012/2013	30	257	412	11	710	218	263	121	5	607	16,745	-	16,745
2013/2014	52	297	514	14	877	360	313	167	8	848	19,164	197	19,361
2014/2015	34	438	618	34	1,124	498	341	276	18	1,133	23,407	751	24,158
2015/2016	80	438	683	35	1,236	594	347	312	18	1,271	26,909	1559	28,468

Source: Annual reports of DMU

Reference Materials

The University’s self-evaluation document identifies the serious shortage of seat and reference materials in the libraries. Available space hosted only one-fourth of the entire students’ population,³⁸ until the main library started service by 2012/2013. The opening of the main library had quadrupled the libraries’ carrying capacity. In 2014/2015, there were 218,959 collections in total. In the coming year

152,673 varieties of reference materials were inserted. Interestingly, all libraries have been connected by fiber optics so as to utilize well both electronic and hard copy reserves. Yet, online catalog has been prepared towards the end of the decade.³⁹ In any case, reference materials seemed not a problem of the under-graduate program during the late period.

Teaching, Research and Community Service



DMU's early problems had been somewhat solved during the late period: roads were built; offices were arranged; access to an internet was somewhat expanded; temporary lounge and rest-rooms were made available for the teaching and non-teaching staff; the dearth of class, laboratory, workshop rooms and library was minimized; staff profile was improved etc. Relatively, an attractive University ground had been created. Perhaps based on this development, popular opinions corroborated DMU's excellence in the teaching-learning domain. The University community and the high management, too, shared similar opinion.⁴⁰ Did the overall set up surfaced so far allow such success? Let's discuss issues beyond the physical and human resources.

During the late period, several changes had been applied in improving the University's working system. These were Modularization, አንድ ለ አምስት (One to Five) organization, Kayzen and Basic Score Card (BSC).⁴¹ DMU implemented Modularization relatively before other universities get into the stage. And, it won recognition for both its early introduction and 'successful' implementation.⁴² Yet, though it escaped the early resistances, the system was partially canceled after some years due to its inapplicability to most of the

disciplines.⁴³ The focal points of modularization, in terms of methodology, are participatory teaching approach and continuous assessment. These tasks require reasonable class size for effective implementation. But, students' number per class size stipulated in the University legislation put up in contrast to the requirements of participatory teaching and continuous assessment requirements.⁴⁴

The teaching staff work load is the other crucial element that needs profound examination in relation to attaining quality education through Modularization and One to Five arrangement. According to the University legislation, a full time academic staff has to work 39 hours per week for tasks like teaching, research, administrative work, committee assignment, and student advising. True, the introduction of Modularization and One to Five arrangement had brought extra routine tasks which augmented the teaching staff work load like preparing, delivering and correcting re-exams, organizing and monitoring One to Five teams, following የልማት ቡድን (Development Team) tasks, evaluating examination papers before delivery etc. They had also raised the frequency of meetings. Moreover, lecturers were asked to give tutorial classes for low achiever students in general and female



students in particular. They were also enforced to take, in addition to their work load, Higher Diploma Program Training for four hours per week.⁴⁵ The work load stipulated in the legislation did not take into consideration those extra loads emanated from One to Five arrangements', Modularization and extra obligations or the legislation has no saying regarding overload payment for these activities. Such extra work burdens and the absence of appealing incentives had negatively impacted the effectiveness and motivation of the teaching staff.

The nature of reforms and political interventions also need some explanation. Regarding reforms, the idea of implementing Modularization, One to Five arrangements, Basic Score Card (BSC), Kayzen, and the like did not sprout in Higher Institution. Instead they came from the political leadership of the country. Universities were directly or indirectly enforced, although discussions were accomplished, to adopt the reforms incongruent with their autonomous right. Moreover, the political leadership had extended its influences deep into Higher Institutions. For example, a political oriented "training" had been given to the University community by political cadres

coming from regional or federal administrative units. The University communities were forced to attend such "trainings" irrespective of their interests and knowledge. Beyond this, the University has been serving as a center where members of the ruling political parties indoctrinate their political programs. Members of Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front namely Tigray People Liberation Front, Amhara National Democratic Movement, Oromo People Democratic Organization and Southern People Democratic Movement had assigned salaried political cadres working within students. Similar political indoctrination had been given for party members of the teaching and non-teaching staffs. Except in rare cases, all academic and non-academic positions were given based on political affiliation with the ruling party.⁴⁶ The aforementioned political interventions surely acted against maintaining quality education through consuming time, worsening the student-teacher as well as the high management-teacher relation and the like.

Needless to say, the EPRDF government education policy prioritized mass education. In line with this, it encouraged students' attrition rate to be low.⁴⁷ True, attrition rate had lowered to 2.67, 2.43, 2.69 and 1.67



during the 2011 / 2012, 2012 / 2013, 2013 / 2014 and 2014/2015, respectively.

⁴⁸ However, the lower attrition rate is believed to have been emanated from the loose evaluation system surfaced due to continuous assessment, re-exam and so forth. ⁴⁹ The quality of education could certainly be affected by the aforementioned policy related issues and work burdens. Therefore, since there had not been conducive environment that support DMU to excel in the teaching-learning domain, the proliferated popular opinion emanated from mere assumption.

The last years of the early and the late periods witnessed the birth and growth of institutions, new programs, workshop centers and the like that can assist the research and community service. Some of these are the establishment of DMU Archive Center, the beginning of Post-Graduate Program, the establishment of Haddis Alemayehu Cultural Studies Center, the opening of Zoological Natural Science History Museum, Dairy Farm and so on. Though all have their own contribution to the Teaching, Research and Community Service, the establishment of the Archive Center, Zoological Natural Science History Museum and Dairy Farm eased the difficulty of searching research data. The growing

Staff Profile, the beginning of Post-Graduate Program, the establishment of Haddis Alemayehu Cultural Studies Center, Dairy Farming, etc. could potentially embolden the research and community service part. However, the research work did not show a steady increment. Though staff interest and capacity grew year after year, the University was unable to sponsor good numbers of research proposals.⁵⁰

The culture of conducting Seminar, Workshop, and Conference too did not show significant development. Two Annual Conferences had been prepared: the one by the Research Vice President Office and the other by the Haddis Alemayehu Cultural Studies Center. Throughout the decade, there was no conference conducted at Institution and College levels. Similarly, the tradition of conducting Seminar Presentation although a key platform to promote academic debate did not develop as such. In 2015/16 academic year, for instance, only 20 Seminar Presentations were accomplished. This is very small in a University having large number of Colleges, Departments, and Under-graduate and Post-graduate Programs.⁵¹ In the main, the University did not cultivate academic debate to be a culture.

Campuses and Centers



Higher Education Institutions reach in wider areas through opening campus and establishing continuing education centers. Quite the opposite, DMU housed in a single campus during the early period and thus could not get to wider areas.

During the late period, campus requests were coming from the nearby Bure and Merto Le Mariam Colleges of Agriculture. Yet, information is scarce how DMU entertained those requests. Incidentally, the Ministry of Education placed students of the College of Agriculture at Bure by 2012. This had ignited opposition from staff members of the College of Agriculture who had no information on the issue before students' placement was made public. The community of Debre Markos' town had also opposed students' placement fearing permanent "transferring" of the College to Bure. An open discussion was conducted and the University Management responded that students' placement was provisionally due to lack of space. Anyhow, it was canceled. After a short time, the Merto Le Mariam College of Agriculture submitted a campus request having prepared its curriculum. Receiving it, the University had conducted a curriculum review. In this state of affairs, the Bure campus was officially opened by 2013.⁵²

The building of extra campus for the College of Medicine was at a stage of planning by the end of the decade. Alongside, DMU widened its destination through opening Continuing Education Centers. It started at Bichena in 2014/2015 housing at the Belay Zeleke Preparatory Secondary School. Launching distance education was at planning and preparation stage by the same year.⁵³

Staff Turn Over

The ten years' journey of DMU was epitomized by bursting difficult circumstances. Interestingly, the early staffs were committed enough to triumph over such arduous scenario. Since existing problems were largely originated from the premature beginning of the University, the founding staff had strived to prevail over and wished to see a multifaceted institution soon. Consequently, staff turnover was not an issue of the time.⁵⁴ Unlike this, several staff turnover incidents had been registered during the late period. Lecturers left the organization soon after completing their second or third degree training. In 2014/15 academic year, for instance, thirty-eight teaching staffs left the institution. To combat the problem the University began to take legal actions against those who left DMU in violation of the study leave agreement.



Sources indicate that while six of them refunded the training cost as per their agreement, the remaining cases were handled by lawyers. But, the University seemed no occupying the right track in dealing with staff turnover. This is because it kept an eye on following a staff member either to finish his/her commitment or refund the training cost before leaving the institution.⁵⁵ This is neither a profitable nor a lasting solution. It would be better if it had worked hard on reducing the unfavorable working conditions and making it more attractive.

According to informants, the increasing staff turnover was related to, apart from others, the substandard achievements recorded in key areas. Let's discuss three crucial cases: Research, Staff Residence and Collaboration. Suffice to say, research was initiated in a good time, but its growth was greatly stifled. Throughout the late period, the University failed to raise the research budget to the required level and invite great number of researchers to take part in various research projects. Not only winning research work was difficult due to budget constraint but also the allotted fund was very small and unattractive. Consequently, staff members could not benefit from the system. Secondly, in the town like Debre Markos where

standard housing is scarce and paradoxically rent is high, building staff residence is crucial. However, staff residence was/is not only limited in quantity but also inferior in quality. The dearth of staff residence did more in repelling the teaching staff. Thirdly, the University lagged in establishing relation with domestic and foreign Higher Education Institutions and Research Centers. Therefore, the staff did not have an opportunity of experience sharing, PhD and post-doc training abroad, getting fund for project work and the like.⁵⁶

Besides, the higher management was blamed in keeping staff benefits minimum compared with senior, contemporary and even junior sister higher institutions. For instance, advisory payment in both the undergraduate and post-graduate program and teaching payment in the continuing classes are believed to have remained at its lowest ebb throughout the decade. Besides, lecturers were enforced to take higher diploma training and offer tutorial classes for female and low achiever students with extra work load, but without considering payments. There was also discontent on educational opportunities abroad. Education abroad had been a gratuity for staff members who had special link with the high management.⁵⁷

Conclusion



DMU began work ahead of time. Both the physical and human resources were servicing before attaining their right growth. Buildings and other infrastructures began functioning before construction completion. Likewise, the human resource particularly the teaching staff embarked on work before getting the right qualification and experience. Academic programs too were initiated early in the paucity of basic inputs. This led to the conclusion that every input was victim of premature beginning. The cumulative effect was the production of impotent graduates.

So far, DMU did not exercise its autonomous right well. Let alone the Ministry of Education, any political organ conveyed its mission well at the expenses of DMU's autonomous right. Critical analysis of sources shows that DMU had invested time in serving the ruling political organs as much as cultivating academic endeavor.

DMU has been passing through many challenges since its inception. It has attempted to contribute its own share in the overall progress of the nation in parallel with setting itself on a consolidated position. In this regard, the first ten years can be seen as formative periods in which the University strived to organize itself into an effective higher educational institution.

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